

The Home Reading Circle

THE RACE-MEET OF THE ATLANTIS WHEELMEN.

By MARY C. FRANCIS.

(Copyright, 1896, by the Bachelier Syndicate.)

SYNOPSIS.

Nelson Scott, who has won a prominent position as a fast bicycle rider, is in love with Josephine Gordon, who is a reporter on a New York newspaper. She is assigned to interview a famous editor, Harberson, some distance from town, and rides down on her wheel. Scott arranges to meet her and ride home with her. He intends to visit Australia, and he has a racing team, and has asked her to help him in his plans—by way of leading up to a proposal. Her wheel is stolen at Harberson's, and she is sent home by Harberson in a carriage. Before she leaves, she promises to help Scott with his plans if he wins the great race of the Atlantis Wheelmen, for which he has entered. The race-meet comes off, and Scott, who has meanwhile recovered Josephine's wheel, prepared himself for the contest.

PART III.

Josephine had been working up to a pitch of excitement all the afternoon, and as the time for the handicap arrived she was conscious of a nervous tremor running through her in spite of herself. Only a few moments before the race was called, a note was handed her by a messenger, saying: "Do not leave after the races until I see you. I have found your wheel and will give it to you myself, provided I win the handicap race. In that event, I will hold you to your promise; if I do not, I will say nothing about it. Remember that you promised to be my mascot, Nelson."

It was impossible for her to conceal her delight at the recovery of her lost wheel. "Oh, I have good news," she said, in reply to the inquiring glances of her friends. "Mr. Scott has found my bicycle and will give it to me after the races. It is almost too good to believe!"

Hastily borrowing a pencil, she wrote in reply: "A thousand thanks for my wheel. If I am a mascot you are a wizard—you shall win the race, Josephine."

The girls in the box exchanged glances. "He is a fine-looking man," said the girl in the buff topcoat, critically surveying Scott through her field glasses. "I heard the other day that he is going to Australia with that racing team that goes out soon. Do you know about it, Josephine? What do you do, when you are up in everything about cycling?"

"I have a cousin out in Australia," said the girl in the red roses, "and he likes it awfully. He has an invitation to go out there, and I don't know if I don't know about it. How do you think you would like such a trip, Josephine?"

Josephine was spared the reply that did not rise readily to her lips. The bell rang. The track was clear for the men who were lined up in the long, ladder-like line that stretched from the tape to a point four hundred yards in advance, and for the men who carefully held the wheels with tense muscles, waiting for the sharp crack of a pistol that should announce the critical heat of the handicap, and Scott was on the scratch, while before him a variegated line of men showed what he must meet and pass, as he would quit the race.

"You seem to be nervous, Scott," said his trainer. "This will never do. Brace up—you're better than any other man on the ladder. Lay low till the last mile and then ride your best. The only man you need fear is Baird, and he isn't in the best condition today. All you have to do is to hang to the bunch in the lead and look out for the man who is getting ready to sprint on the home stretch."

There was a long broken line of color on the track where the racing colors of the men were stretched out for the contest. The excitement of the grand stand was stifled for the signal. The man on scratch threw up his head and gave one swift glance in the direction of the boxes and then lowered it over his wheel with such an air as an ancient gladiator might have awaited the rush of his foe in the arena. In the boxes one girl was oblivious to the subdued buzz of voices about her, and saw only one man of all the group. There was a final instant of silence, then the timers in the stand nodded, several officials on the track stepped to one side, the starter raised his arm, and a second later a pistol rang out sharply on the autumn stillness. The men were off like a flash—their wheels rocking for a moment with the uncertain vibration of the start, and then a race for a prize and more than a prize was on.

The men were racing out in a straight line and were running easily, watching one another closely and on their guard for the final mile. It was an interesting but not altogether exciting heat, although at the end of the fourth mile the cheer of the multitude in favor of Baird, the clever local favorite, created a decided stir. Men and women

stood up in their seats and called to him. "Billy" came in all right, and so did three other men, but Josephine knew only that Nelson Scott was one, and he had qualified for the final.

"Why is a handicap run in heats, and why are they called heats?" asked the girl with the red roses. "Oh, because it's according to the rules," replied Josephine, absently. "The girl in the red roses and the girl in the buff topcoat looked at one another, and then the first put up her programme and whispered to the second, after which both looked wise and asked no more questions for some time."

The afternoon sped rapidly away after this. The crowd was now on foot, but the appetite of the crowd was whetted for the handicap, and there was a comparative lack of interest for the next hour, albeit the sport was the most exciting of the day. The spectators seemed to communicate a magnetism to the men on the track. It was shortly after five o'clock when the time arrived for the final contest for the handicap. Some of the best men in the country had qualified for the final in the second and third heats, and everyone knew that it was a well-matched trial among first-class professionals. The winning of a heat for a final does not alter the position of the men in the final. The men who were lined up in the ladder once more for the trial that would decide all, the relative position of the men was the same. Scott was on the scratch again, but he did not enjoy the prestige of Baird, the local favorite, who, although he had run "in and out," as the turf would say, still held the popular favor—something inexplicable, by the way, as the supremacy of many a footlight genius is explained by the lack of artistic merit.

Altogether, twelve men had qualified for the final, and the "ladder" was made up with one man on scratch and one each at a dozen different distances up to three hundred and fifty yards. The crowd was massed in the closest possible space to witness the event, and the favorites were roundly cheered as they took their places on the track, but, although Scott had his share as he was the object of the most proportion to the greeting accorded Baird.

Again the track was cleared, and a preliminary hush fell over the crowd as the men awaited the signal. Josephine had forgotten that she might be the object of curious scrutiny and leaned over the edge of the box, knowing only that all her interest was centered in one of the men who sat motionless on his wheel, ready to shoot from his hole like an arrow at a critical instant. He looked strangely in her brain. "Not Australia—anything but that," she said, to herself. "He will win the race—he must win it—but not Australia."

The last word had scarcely formed itself in her mind when she felt a shock from the starter's pistol. The men were off, and the final of the great handicap race was taking place before her eyes. Only experienced eyes could follow the men, as they shot around the track on the first lap of one-third of a mile, and kept their relative positions. Stewart led; behind him came Burrell, Martin and Baird, in the order named, and they started out in a manner that left no doubt that they intended to set the pace for the entire race. The eight other men followed after in no evident haste for the first mile or so, Scott prudently reserving himself for developments at the end of the third or fourth mile.

At the end of the first mile no one could tell which man had an advantage over any other man, for they ran easily in front of the judges' stand in a line. Scott knew that it was a race, not merely of speed, but of endurance and tactics, and, while he did not relax his gaze, he kept a wary eye on every man ahead of him, with every muscle ready to sprint at full speed the instant there was necessity for it. The second mile was run much the same as the first, and then the calls of the spectators indicated that there was a demand for a display of speed. The men began to warm up. In the second lap of the third mile the four men in the lead showed a disposition to creep up on each other, a frame of mind quickly emulated by those behind, and the rivalry of the two factions worked itself out so promptly that a rapid pace was soon set. At the end of the third mile a swift race was in progress.

The relative positions of the men were rapidly changing, and it seemed as if everyone were rapidly coming up to his neighbor. Slowly but surely Scott lessened the distance between himself and Richards, the man just ahead of him. The second lap of the fourth mile showed that the men were racing for records—they passed the stand amid a shout of applause that must have stirred the blood in their veins to renewed effort, if they were not already making it. As they rounded into the backstretch, the grand stand broke out into a great cheer for all the men suddenly seemed to set a new pace, and sprinted ahead at a gallop that set the spectators wild. There was a break in the color line, and, as they turned the corner for the final third of the fourth mile, and came down the stretch at a killing pace, there was a roar that echoed far out beyond the track. The first bunch consisting of Stewart, Burrell, Martin and Baird; the second of Scott, Richards and six others. As they rounded the turn for the last lap after the fourth mile, Scott shot ahead of the bunch in which he was traveling and set out closely in the lead of the second group, knowing that his real struggle would be there, and when they passed the stand again, it was evident that he would share in the contest on the home stretch. The grand stand was excited again, and called loudly for the favorite, while there were counter calls for others, including Scott. Everybody was standing up and shouting—Josephine saw half a dozen tracks circling unevenly before her—all the color of the solar spectrum swam before her eyes—the muscles of the racers stood out in great chords—the men rounded into the last turn and came into the home stretch at a reckless pace. Some one elbowed—a man fell from his wheel and rolled over on the track at full length like a log. The

girl's figure. She looked at him appealingly, but he was relentless. "Tell me," he insisted. "Will you go?"

"Yes," she said, as they were preparing to mount again and continue their homeward way, Josephine's terror of Australia suddenly returned to her. "Oh, I don't want to go to that horrid country," she exclaimed. "What horrid country!" asked Scott, looking up from the lamp he was lighting. "Why, Australia, of course. Everybody seems to be suddenly daft about it, and I have heard nothing but Australia from every quarter for two weeks past. I know I shall hate it out there."

Scott looked at her curiously for an instant, and then paid sudden and ardent attention to his wheel. "I wouldn't worry about that just yet, if I were you."

Josephine was in the act of mounting. As she looked into his eyes a certain suspicion darted across her mind. "Nelson Scott," she said, righteous indignation quivering in her voice, "I don't believe you ever intended to go to Australia."

He smoothed her hair gently away from her brow. "My dear, I had to do something," he said.

THE END.

HE MADE A MISTAKE.

The Judge Tells of an Experience in a Pennsylvania Court. From the Detroit Free Press.

It was the Judge who was talking. "One of my most peculiar experiences was while I was on the bench down in Pennsylvania. Hunk Wooders was brought down from the mountains charged with stealing a shoat from one of his neighbors. I had hunted and fished with the old fellow as a guide and felt sorry to see him in trouble. I asked him if he wanted a jury trial. "Don't want no trial, 'tall," he replied doggedly. "I'll just plead guilty. I ain't got no witnesses or no friends. They'll just swear I stole that hog an' where'll I be?"

"But did you steal it, Hunk?" "Didn't steal nuthin'. But I kin take my medicine." "I'll enter a plea of not guilty and appoint a lawyer to defend you. You shall have a chance to prove your innocence."

"I ain't a goin' ter foolin' round with no lawyer. I bought that shoat from a feller, an' that's all there are to it."

"Then I called him to me and whispered: 'Now, honest, Hunk, between man and man, did you steal the pig?' "Just between you and me, Judge?" "No one else shall know a word about it."

"Course I did. That there measly Bill Sims owed me \$3 for two years an' I jist lifted th' shoat ter get even." "The case went to trial. The testimony against Hunk was strong and I charged the jury as fairly as ever I did in my life, but they acquitted him."

"Then Hunk came up to me with flushed face and hanging head. 'From my soul Judge, I didn't mean ter tell you a lie. I thought I stole that shoat, but it 'pears I didn't.'"

GREAT FEATS OF STRENGTH.

Phenomenal Record of Muscular Endurance by One Little Giant. From the Home Magazine.

Perhaps one of the most phenomenal records of muscular endurance by a man of small stature is that of Oscar Matthes, who is only 4 feet 11 inches in height and weighs 163 pounds. He performed, in Boston, in 1895, the feat of putting up with one hand from floor to shoulder to arm's length above his head a 50-pound dumb bell forty-eight times in succession and a 76-pound

AT THE END OF THE CENTURY.



"The way girls carry on nowadays is positively awful. The very idea of getting engaged to half a dozen men in a season! People didn't do that when I was young." "Think times have improved wonderfully since then, Grandma?"

dumb-bell twenty times without a rest. Alike wonderful was the performance of Anthony McKinley, who put a 10-pound 1/2 oz. dumb-bell up to arm's length above his head 10,000 times in two hours thirteen minutes and twenty seconds, an average of over seventy-five times a minute.

SAVINGS OF JEFFERSON.

The day is not distant when we may formally require a meridian of partition through the ocean which separates the two hemispheres, on the hitter side of which no European gun shall ever be heard nor an American on the other; and when, during the rage of the eternal wars of Europe, the lion and the lamb, within our regions, shall lie down together in peace.

We owe gratitude to France; Justice to England; good will to all; subservience to none.

I fear nothing from force, but I have felt much and fear more from English books, English prejudices, English manners, and the spies, the dupes, and designers among our own professional classes.

The government which can wield the arm of the people must be the strongest possible.

I do not mean to say that it may not be for the general interest to foster for awhile certain infant manufactures until they are strong enough to stand against foreign rivals, but when evident that they will never be so, it is against right to make other branches of industry support them.

The great principles of right and wrong are legible to every reader; to pursue them requires not the aid of many counselors.

I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could be made to our system of states.

Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe.

Banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies.

Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want bread.

The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest.

The time to guard against corruption and tyranny is before they have gotten hold of us.

As to the tariff, I should say put down all banks, admit none but a metallic circulation that will take its proper level with the like circulation in other countries, and then our manufactures may work in fair competition with those of other countries, and the import duties which the government may lay for the purpose of revenue will so far place them above equal competition.

It is not by the consolidation of concentration of powers, but by their distribution, that good government is effected.

An aristocracy of wealth is of more harm and danger than benefit to society.

No ground of support for the Executive will ever be so sure as a complete knowledge of their proceedings by the people.

I think all the world would gain by setting commerce at perfect liberty.

A judiciary independent of a king or executive alone is a good thing; but independent of the will of the nation is a solecism, at least in a republican government.

The proportion between the values of gold and silver is a mercantile problem altogether.

Nothing is so important as that America shall separate herself from the systems of Europe and establish one of her own. Our circumstances, our pursuits, our interests are distinct; the principles of our policy should be so also. All entanglements with that quarter of the globe should be avoided if we mean that peace and justice shall be the polar stars of the American societies.

—Compiled by the Washington Post.

SHATTERED,

The Precarious Condition of Prof. A. H. Nye.

A Prominent Iowa Educator's Painful Experience as Related by Him to a Newspaper Man.

From the Gazette, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

The la grippe, that dread disease that had such a run throughout this country three and four years since, left many who were previously in robust health with shattered constitutions and seemingly confirmed invalids.

Prof. A. H. Nye, living at No. 2500 Olive Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa, was among the number left by the disease in a precarious condition, his nervous system shattered, and with a general debility of his entire system; no strength, feet and limbs badly swollen, in fact, he was almost helpless.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, for people who have been left in poor health from la grippe or any other epidemic. Any one wishing to test the validity of this letter can write Mr. Nye, No. 2500 Olive Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa, and will cheerfully recommend the medicine, and state his condition before and after using.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills contain all the elements necessary to give new life and zebiness to the blood and restore shattered nerves. They are sold in boxes (never in loose form, six boxes for \$2.50, and may be had of all druggists or directly by mail from Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Schenectady, N. Y.

The Most Delightful SPRING TRIPS

are those by the handsome large steamships of the

OLD DOMINION LINE

sailing every week day from New York to OLD POINT COMFORT, VIRGINIA BEACH and RICHMOND, VA.

Round trip tickets, covering a health-giving sea voyage of 700 miles, with meals and stateroom accommodations enroute, for \$13, \$13.50 and \$14.00.

SEND FOR PARTICULARS.

OLD DOMINION STEAMSHIP CO., Pier 26, North River, New York.

W. L. GUILLAUDET, Vice-Pres. & Traffic Mgr.

HOTELS.

THE MURRAY HILL

MURRAY HILL PARK, THOUSAND ISLANDS.

The best located and best furnished hotel on the St. Lawrence river. Accommodations for 300 guests.

Opens June 25th, 1897.

F. R. WHITE, Prop.

WATKINS, SCRIPYER COUNTY, N. Y. On Seneca Lake. On line of New York Central, Pennsylvania, and Lehigh Valley Railroads. 100 feet above water.

New water works, supplying mountain spring water. Sanitary plumbing. Entirely new management. Splendid fishing. 600 acres, including the famous Watkins Glen, Popular picnic grounds, and excursion parties. J. R. KEENAN, formerly Hotel Chamberlain, Mgr. Address W. E. ROBINSO, Prop.

HOME GROWN ASPARAGUS

Fresh Every Morning.

DELAWARE STRAWBERRIES

Arriving Now. Cauliflower, Green and Wax Beans, Egg Plant, Tomatoes, Etc.

W. H. PIERCE, PENN AVE. MARKET

Never Too Late To learn the worth of THE SCRANTON TRIBUNE'S "Want" Columns. If you have merely been an onlooker while the Tribune "Wants" were bringing results, and preferred to see what others would do, the time has come to get in line with the army of "Want" advertisers and use the Tribune "Wants." Thousands read them every day! A good opportunity will never be overlooked. "Want" advertising costs less in the Tribune than in any other first-class medium. It is never too late to - - - Try Tribune Wants

BABY HUMORS

Instant relief for skin-tormented babies and rest for tired mothers in a warm bath with CUTICURA SOAP, and a single application of CUTICURA (ointment), the great skin cure. The only speedy and economical treatment for itching, burning, bleeding, scaly, and pimply humors of the skin, scalp, and blood.

Cuticura

Sold throughout the world. PUTTING DRESS AND CAREFUL CONSIDERATION INTO PREPARING BABY'S SOAP, and a single application of CUTICURA SOAP.